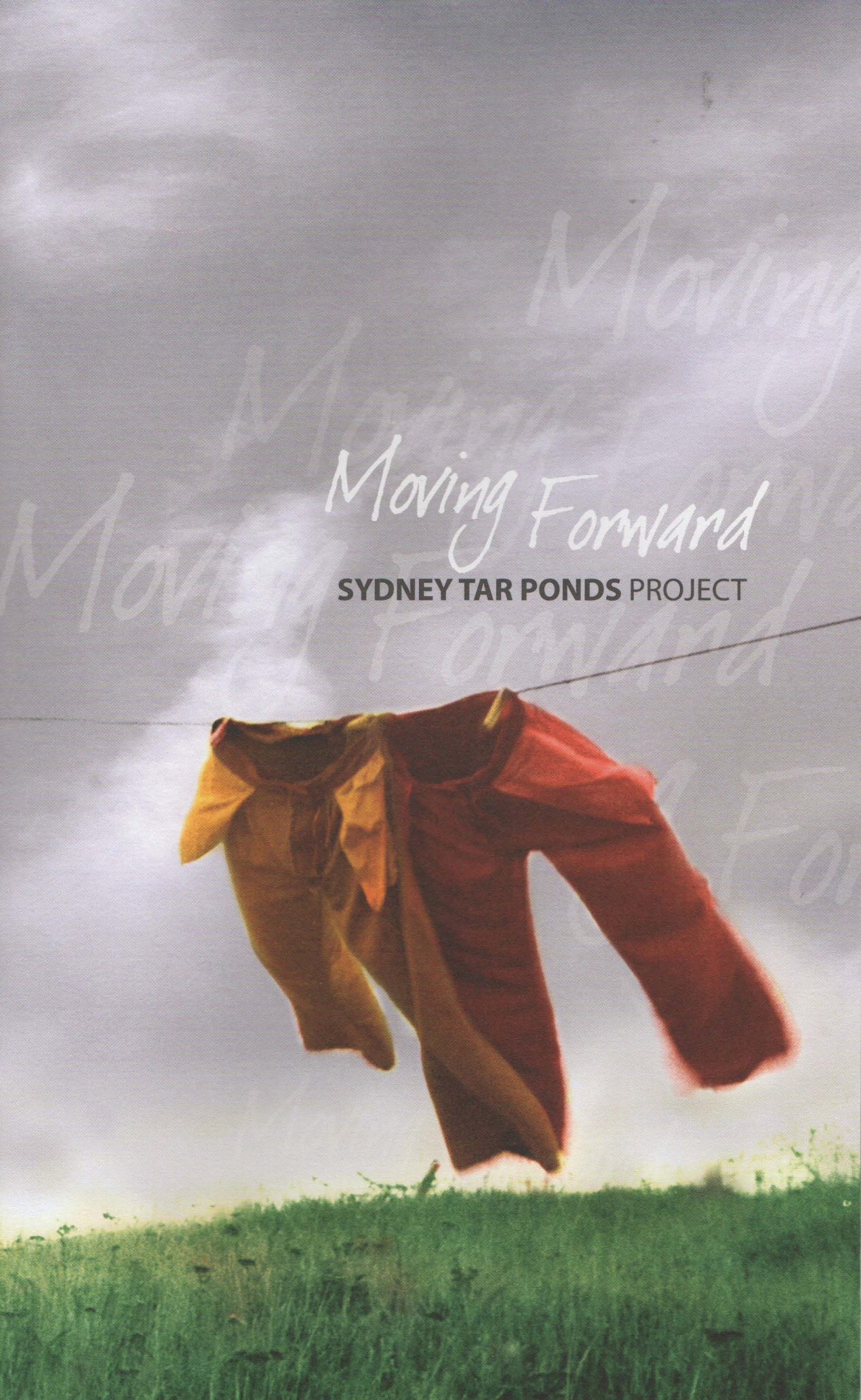
Moving Forward
SYDNEY TAR PONDS PROJECT

At the dawn of the Twentieth revolution roared through

Photo Courtesy of Ray Martheleur

At the dawn of the Twentieth Century, the industrial revolution roared through North America like a steam train. Demand for iron and steel boomed, and Sydney, Nova Scotia, became a major source of supply.

The Sydney Steel Plant began production in 1901, using Cape Breton coal and Newfoundland iron ore. By 1912, Sydney was supplying nearly half the steel produced in Canada. The sleepy seaport grew into a bustling steel town, drawing immigrants from around the world. The plant eventually came to employ nearly 6,000 people.

Century, the industrial
North America like a steam train.

Photo Courtesy of the Beaton Institute

Steel makers of that era gave little thought to the environment. As the decades rolled by, coal waste and other chemicals gradually turned a pristine estuary in the heart of Sydney into an environmental blight: the Sydney Tar Ponds.

In the 1990s, various obstacles halted two plans to clean up the Tar Ponds. In 1996, the three levels of government began a process working cooperatively with the community to seek acceptable solutions for the sites. That process saw the completion of thorough assessments, and extensive demolition projects. It led to a community cleanup recommendation, and whetted appetites to get on with the job.

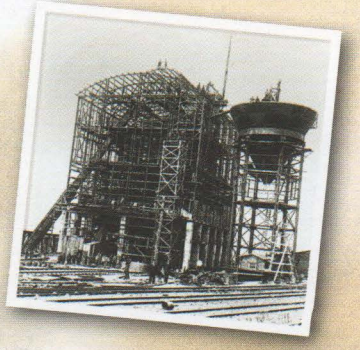

Photo Courtesy of the Beaton Institute

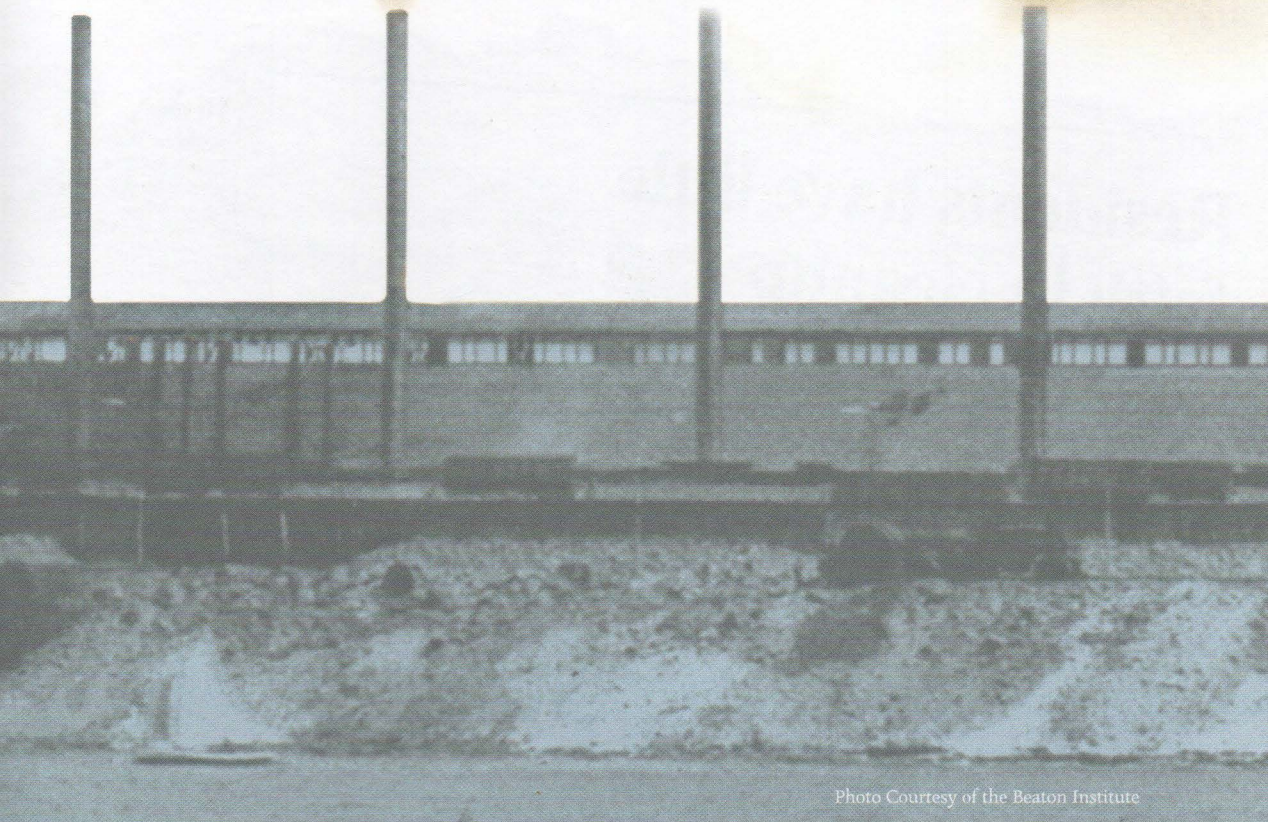

Photo Courtesy of the Beaton Institute

Troubled Cleanup Efforts

Residents have little faith in cleanup

Tar ponds toxic lega

sing their patience on tar ponds

The Chronicle-Herald

THE GLOBE AND

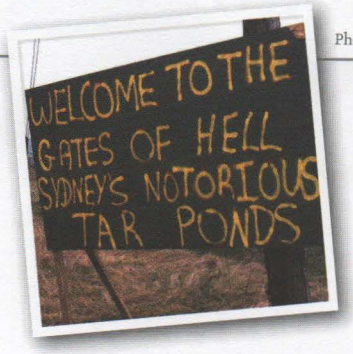

Photo Courtesy of Cape Breton Post

In the early 1980s, fisheries scientists found toxic chemicals from the Tar Ponds in lobsters caught in Sydney Harbour. Officials closed the fishery indefinitely, kick-starting cleanup efforts.

In 1986, the federal and provincial governments signed a five year agreement to clean up the Tar Ponds. The agreement also set a deadline for closing the Coke Ovens, a significant employer as well as a major polluter. The cleanup attempted to dredge Tar Ponds material and burn it in an incinerator. By 1994, technical difficulties and rising costs forced a premature end to the project.

In 1996, the province proposed covering the Tar Ponds with slag from the steel plant. Many residents opposed the plan. Later that year, federal and provincial ministers met to consider developing a community-based solution.

The Mail-Star The Chronicle-Herald

CANADA

Tar ponds hit by PCB count

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TAR PONDS RESIDENTS REJECT CL

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Turning to the Community

Photo Courtesy of Cape Breton Post

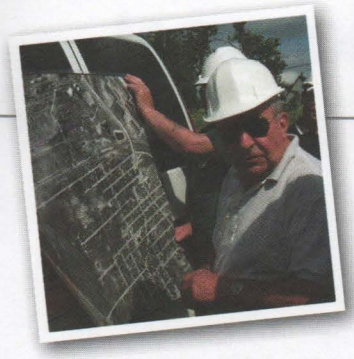


Photo Courtesy of Cape Breton Post

Late in 1996, citizens and the three levels of government formed the Joint Action Group (JAG) to seek consensus around safe, technically sound cleanup solutions. JAG was a unique organization. Its members passed resolutions asking government to expand the proposed cleanup area, conduct thorough site assessments following national contaminated sites guidelines, and begin preliminary cleanup projects. JAG also asked for research to determine any health impacts associated with the sites. That research showed that Sydney is a safe place to live and raise a family. Governments funded these projects through a $62-million, federal-provincial-municipal cost sharing agreement signed in 1999.

More than 100,000 volunteer hours and 900 community meetings culminated in a short list of cleanup options, presented to the community in February, 2003. JAG then carried out intense public consultation in which more than 1,700 residents took part in workshops to consider the options in detail. The results provided a cross-section of views on how best to clean up the Tar Ponds and Coke Ovens.

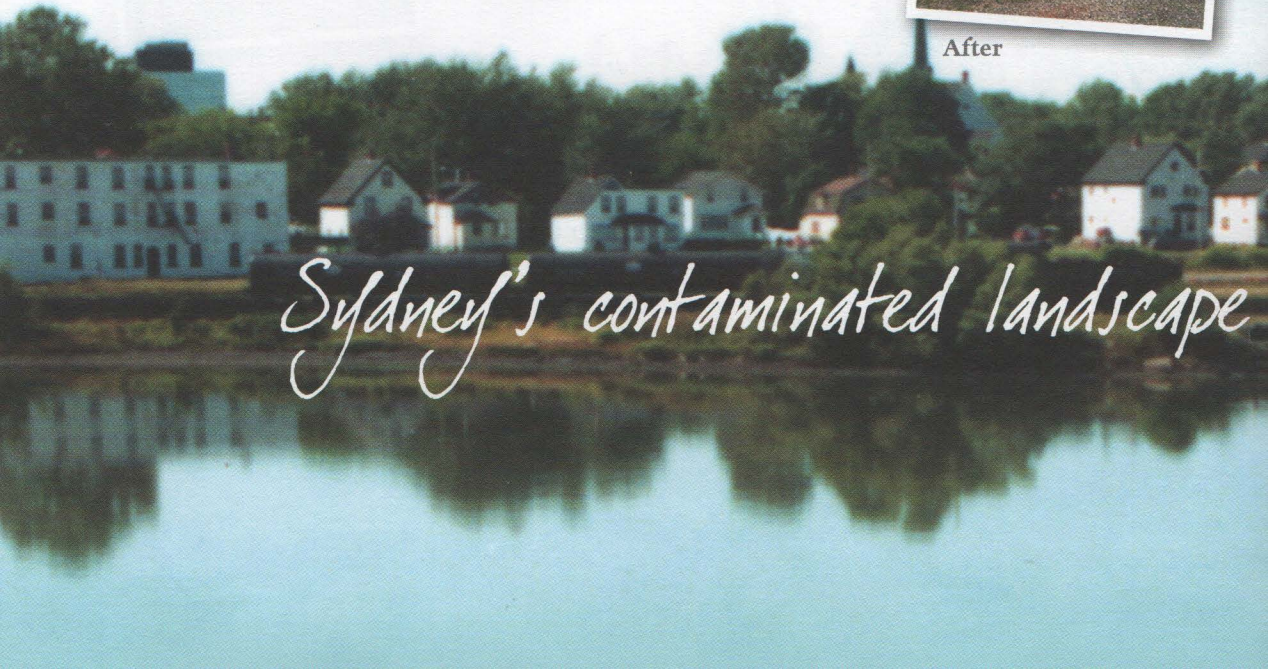
JAG considered the community response and, on May 28, 2003, urged governments to use removal and destruction technologies in the cleanup of the site.

Getting on with the Job

Sydney's contaminated landscape has begun to change. The smoke stacks that towered over the city are gone, along with derelict buildings and other industrial eyesores. An engineered cap has transformed an ugly, abandoned municipal dump into a grassy hillside. An interceptor sewer will divert millions of litres of raw sewage from Muggah Creek to an enhanced primary treatment plant. This work grew out of extensive community consultation. It used precautions that minimized risks to project workers and nearby residents. The new landscape has begun a healing process – rebuilding trust, reaffirming government commitments, and setting the community's sights on the future.

Before

After



Sydney's contaminated landscape

MILESTONES

1982	Sydney Harbour, South Arm lobster fishery closed.
1986	Canada and Nova Scotia signed $34.3 million Sydney Tar Ponds Cleanup Agreement.
1988	Coke Ovens closed.
1996	Joint Action Group formed.
1998	Three levels of government and JAG signed Memorandum of Understanding.
1999	$62-Million federal-provincial-municipal cost sharing agreement funded studies, assessments, surface cleanup, and JAG activities.
1999	Province offered voluntary buy-out to Frederick Street residents.
2000	Steel plant closed.
2002	Construction of interceptor sewer began. Major demolition projects completed.
2003	JAG provided cleanup recommendation.

We all look forward to the day when the Sydney Tar Ponds and Coke Ovens will be but a memory.

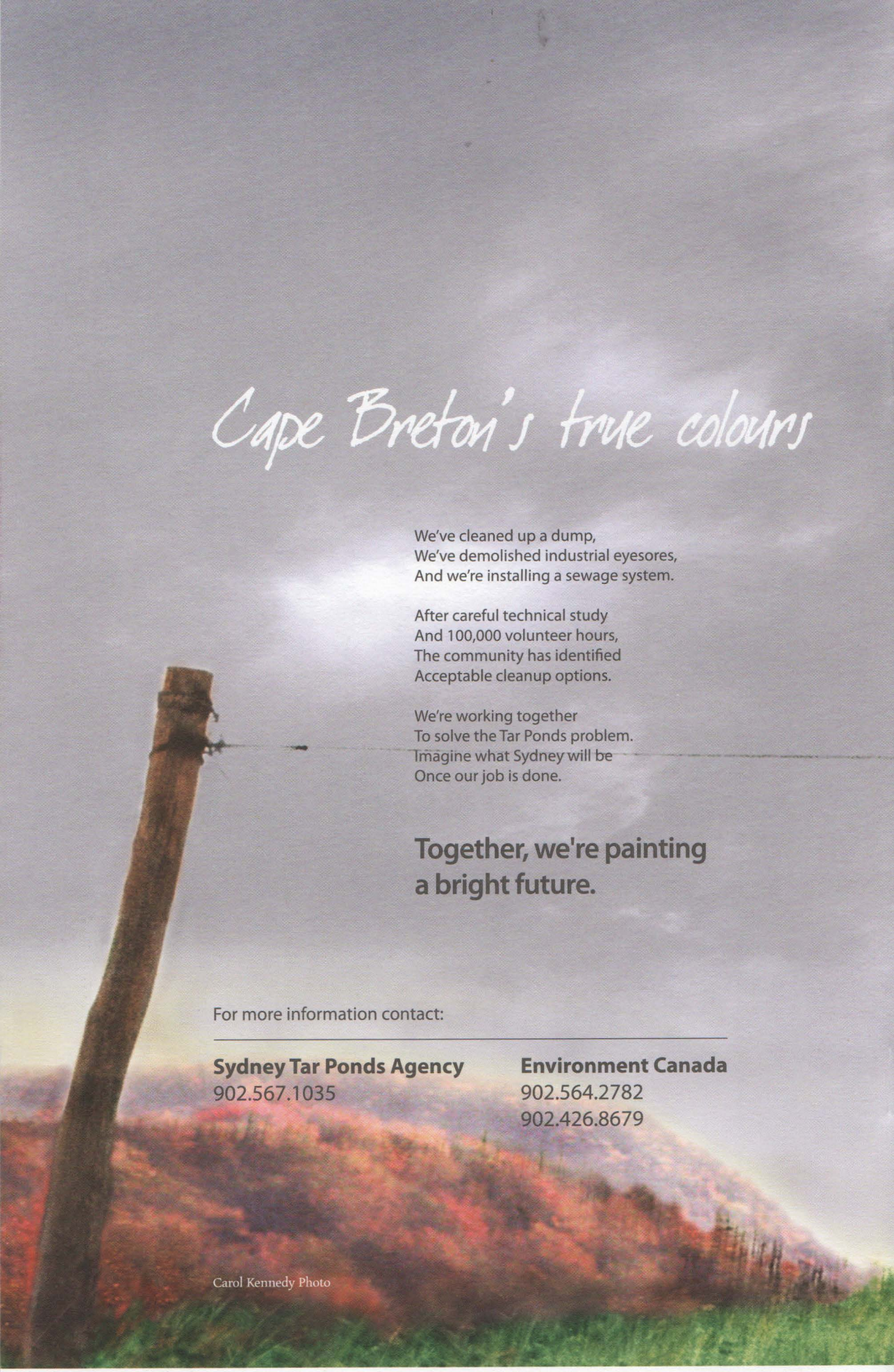
Imagine

Governments give careful consideration to projects of this magnitude, weighing the social, financial and environmental impacts. The Sydney Tar Ponds project is no exception.

Once governments decide on a cleanup method and secure funding, an environmental assessment will begin. Legislation requires an environmental assessment to ensure that necessary safeguards are in place to protect the environment and human health. Everyone is eager to start the cleanup, but our actions must be guided by science.

The community has a lot at stake. The notoriety surrounding Sydney's industrial contamination has impeded social and economic progress, stirred bitter controversy, and diverted energy from other, more forward-looking pursuits.

Imagine what Sydney can be once we clean up the Tar Ponds and Coke Ovens! That future is within reach: The site is well understood, necessary preliminary work is complete, and the community is ready to move forward. We all look forward to the day that the Sydney Tar Ponds and Coke Ovens will be but a memory.



NOVA SCOTIA
Sydney Tar Ponds Agency

CBRM

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